

# Section 1

## INTRODUCTION

### This Section Covers

- Commercial Driver License Tests
- Driver Disqualifications
- How and Where to Apply
- Other Safety Rules

There is a federal requirement that each state have minimum standards for the licensing of commercial drivers.

This manual provides driver license testing information for drivers who wish to have a commercial driver license (CDL). This manual does NOT provide information on all the federal and state requirements needed before you can drive a commercial motor vehicle (CMV). You may have to contact your state driver licensing authority for additional information.

You must have a CDL to operate:

Any single vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of 26,001 pounds or more.

A trailer with a GVWR of more than 10,000 pounds if the gross combination weight rating (GCWR) is 26,001 pounds or more.

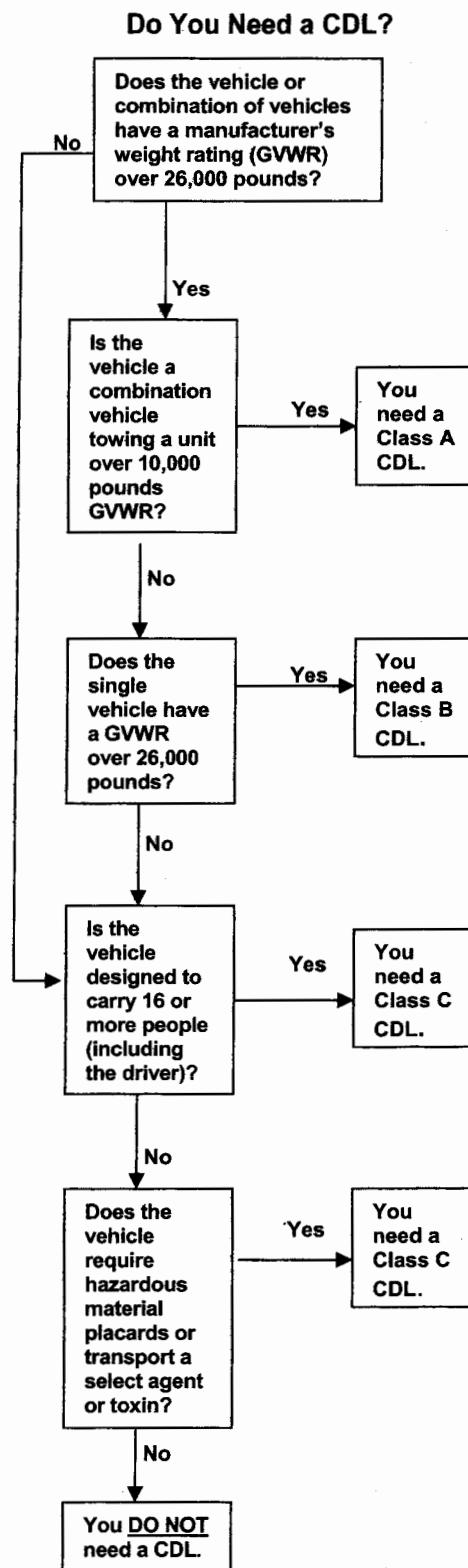
A vehicle designed to transport 16 or more passengers (including the driver).

Any size vehicle that is used in the transportation of any material that requires hazardous materials placards or any quantity of a material listed as a select agent or toxin in 42 CFR 73. Federal regulations through the Department of Homeland Security require a background check and fingerprinting for the Hazardous Materials endorsement. Contact your local department of driver licensing for more information.

(Your state may have additional definitions of CMVs.)

To get a CDL, you must pass knowledge and skills tests. This manual will help you pass the tests. This manual is not a substitute for a truck driver training class or program. Formal training is the most reliable way to learn the many special skills required for safely driving a large commercial vehicle and becoming a professional driver in the trucking industry.

Figure 1.1 helps you determine if you need a CDL.



**NOTE:** A bus may be Class A, B, or C depending on whether the GVWR is over 26,001 pounds or is a combination vehicle.

**Figure 1.1**

## 1.1 – Commercial Driver License Tests

### 1.1.1 – Knowledge Tests

You will have to take one or more knowledge tests, depending on what class of license and what endorsements you need. The CDL knowledge tests include:

The general knowledge test, taken by all applicants.

The passenger transport test, taken by all bus driver applicants.

The air brakes test, which you must take if your vehicle has air brakes, including air over hydraulic brakes.

The combination vehicles test, which is required if you want to drive combination vehicles.

The hazardous materials test, required if you want to haul hazardous materials or waste in amounts that require placarding or any quantity of a material listed as a select agent or toxin in 42 CFR 73. In order to obtain this endorsement you are also required to pass a Transportation Security Administration (TSA) background check.

The tanker test, required if you want to haul a liquid or liquid gas in a permanently mounted cargo tank rated at 119 gallons or more or a portable tank rated at 1,000 gallons or more.

The doubles/triples test, required if you want to pull double or triple trailers.

The School Bust test, required if you want to drive a school bus.

### 1.1.2 – Skills Tests

If you pass the required knowledge test(s), you can take the CDL skills tests. There are three types of general skills that will be tested: pre-trip inspection, basic vehicle control, and on-road driving. You must take these tests in the type of vehicle for which you wish to be licensed.

**Pre-trip Vehicle Inspection.** You will be tested to see if you know whether your vehicle is safe to drive. You will be asked to do a pre-trip inspection of your vehicle and explain to the examiner what you would inspect and why.

**Basic Vehicle Control.** You will be tested on your skill to control the vehicle. You will be asked to move your vehicle forward, backward, and turn it within a defined area. These areas may be marked with traffic lanes, cones, barriers, or something similar. The examiner will tell you how each control test is to be done.

**On-road Test.** You will be tested on your skill to safely drive your vehicle in a variety of traffic situations. The situations may include left and right turns, intersections, railroad crossings, curves, up and down grades, single or multi-lane roads, streets, or highways. The examiner will tell you where to drive.

Figure 1.2 details which sections of this manual you should study for each particular class of license and for each endorsement.

What Sections Should You Study?								
	LICENSE TYPE			ENDORSEMENT				
	Class A	Class B	Class C	Hazardous Materials	Double / Triple	Tank Vehicles	Passenger	School Bus
Sections to Study	1	X	X	X				
	2	X	X	X				
	3	X	X	X		X	X	X
	4				X	X	X	X
	5*	X	X	X	X		X	X
	6	X			X			
	7				X			
	8					X		
	9			X				
	10							X
	11	X	X	X	X		X	X
	12	X	X	X	X		X	X
	13	X	X	X	X		X	X
*Study section 5 if you plan to operate vehicles equipped with air brakes.								

Figure 1.2

## **1.2 – Driver Disqualifications**

### **1.2.1 – General**

You may not drive a commercial motor vehicle if you are disqualified for any reason.

### **1.2.2 – Alcohol, Leaving the Scene of an Accident, and Commission of a Felony**

It is illegal to operate a CMV if your blood alcohol concentration (BAC) is .04% or more. If you operate a CMV, you shall be deemed to have given your consent to alcohol testing.

You will lose your CDL for at least one year for a first offense for:

Driving a CMV if your blood alcohol concentration is .04% or higher.

Driving a CMV under the influence of alcohol.

Refusing to undergo blood alcohol testing.

Driving a CMV while under the influence of a controlled substance.

Leaving the scene of an accident involving a CMV.

Committing a felony involving the use of a CMV.

You will lose your CDL for at least three years if the offense occurs while you are operating a CMV that is placarded for hazardous materials.

You will lose your CDL for life for a second offense.

You will lose your CDL for life if you use a CMV to commit a felony involving controlled substances.

You will be put out-of-service for 24 hours if you have any detectable amount of alcohol under .04%.

### **1.2.3 – Serious Traffic Violations**

Serious traffic violations are excessive speeding (15 mph or more above the posted limit), reckless driving, improper or erratic lane changes, following a vehicle too closely, and traffic offenses committed in a CMV in connection with fatal traffic accidents.

You will lose your CDL:

For at least 60 days if you have committed two serious traffic violations within a three-year period involving a CMV.

For at least 120 days for three serious traffic violations within a three-year period involving a CMV.

### **1.2.4 – Violation of Out-of-Service Orders**

You will lose your CDL:

For at least 90 days if you have committed your first violation of an out-of-service violation order.

For at least one year if you have committed two out-of-service violation orders in a ten-year period.

For at least three years if you have committed three or more out-of-service violation orders in a ten-year period.

### **1.2.5 – Railroad-highway Grade Crossing Violations**

You will lose your CDL:

For at least 60 days for your first violation.

For at least 120 days for your second violation within any three-year period.

For at least one year for your third violation within any three-year period.

These violations include violation of a federal, state or local law or regulation pertaining to one of the following six offenses at a railroad-highway grade crossing:

For drivers who are not required to always stop, failing to stop before reaching the crossing if the tracks are not clear.

For drivers who are not required to always stop, failing to slow down and check that the tracks are clear of an approaching train.

For drivers who are always required to stop, failing to stop before driving onto the crossing.

For all drivers failing to have sufficient space to drive completely through the crossing without stopping.

For all drivers failing to obey a traffic control device or the directions of an enforcement official at the crossing.

For all drivers failing to negotiate a crossing because of insufficient undercarriage clearance.

### **1.2.6 – Hazardous Materials Endorsement Background Check and Disqualifications**

If you require a hazardous materials endorsement you will be required to submit your fingerprints and be subject to a background check.

You will be denied or you will lose your hazardous materials endorsement if you:

Are not a lawful permanent resident of the United States.

Renounce your United States citizenship.

Are wanted or under indictment for certain felonies.

Have a conviction in military or civilian court for certain felonies.

Have been adjudicated as a mental defective or committed to a mental institution.

Are considered to pose a security threat as determined by the Transportation Security Administration.

You will take your Hazardous Materials knowledge test at the nearest driver license testing station, after which the examiner will provide you with all the information you need to complete the required TSA background check procedures.

### **1.2.7 – Traffic Violations in Your Personal Vehicle**

The Motor Carrier Safety Improvement Act (MCSIA) of 1999 requires a CDL holder to be disqualified from operating a commercial motor vehicle if the CDL holder has been convicted of certain types of moving violations in their personal vehicle.

If your license to operate your personal vehicle is revoked, cancelled, or suspended due to serious speeding violations you will lose your CDL for periods ranging from 60 to 120 days.

If your license to operate your personal vehicle is revoked, cancelled, or suspended due to alcohol violations, you will lose your CDL for 1 year. If you are convicted of a second alcohol conviction in your personal vehicle you will lose your CDL for life.

If your license to operate your personal vehicle is revoked, cancelled, or suspended you may not obtain a "hardship" license to operate a CMV.

### **1.3 – Other CDL Rules**

There are other federal and state rules that affect drivers operating CMVs in all states. Among them are:

You cannot have more than one license. If you break this rule, a court may fine you up to \$5,000 or put you in jail and keep your home state license and return any others.

You must notify your employer within 30 days of conviction for any traffic violations (except parking). This is true no matter what type of vehicle you were driving.

You must notify your motor vehicle licensing agency within 30 days if you are convicted in any other jurisdiction of any traffic violation (except

parking). This is true no matter what type of vehicle you were driving.

You must notify your employer if your license is suspended, revoked, or canceled, or if you are disqualified from driving.

You must give your employer information on all driving jobs you have held for the past 10 years. You must do this when you apply for a commercial driving job.

No one can drive a commercial motor vehicle without a CDL. A court may fine you up to \$5,000 or put you in jail for breaking this rule.

If you have a hazardous materials endorsement you must notify and surrender your hazardous materials endorsement to the state that issued your CDL within 24 hours of any conviction or indictment in any jurisdiction, civilian or military, for, or found not guilty by reason of insanity of a disqualifying crime listed in 49 CFR 1572.103; who is adjudicated as a mental defective or committed to a mental institution as specified in 49 CFR 1572.109; or who renounces his or her U. S. citizenship;

Your employer may not let you drive a commercial motor vehicle if you have more than one license or if your CDL is suspended or revoked. A court may fine the employer up to \$5,000 or put him/her in jail for breaking this rule.

All states are connected to one computerized system to share information about CDL drivers. The states will check on drivers' accident records to be sure that drivers do not have more than one CDL.

Your state may have additional rules that you must also obey.

### **1.4-Qualifications**

**To apply for a CDL in the State of Tennessee, you must meet all the qualifications described below.**

1. You must be at least twenty-one (21) years of age. **Exceptions:** if you operate a vehicle solely intrastate and within 100 miles of job, and your vehicle requires no special endorsements, you may obtain a Class A or B license at age (19). You may obtain a Class B license at age eighteen (18) if you meet these same requirements.
2. You must not currently be under a driver license suspension, cancellation, or revocation in this or any other state.
3. You must have a valid, current medical card. The only exceptions are drivers

employed by government entities (except school buses).

4. Be sure to bring proof of citizenship or lawful permanent residence.

## 1.5 –Exemptions

**Exemptions From Commercial Driver License; the following drivers are not required to obtain a CDL:**

1. Farmers or nurserymen transporting agricultural products, farm machinery or farm supplies to or from a farm or nursery, as long as the vehicle is operated within 150 miles of the farm or nursery, and is not used as a common or contract motor carrier.
2. Operators of emergency vehicles.
3. Military personnel.
4. Operators of recreational vehicles.
5. Operators of vehicles leased strictly to transport personal possessions for non-business purposes.

## 1.6-Learner Permits

In order to get a learner permit for a CDL, applicants must meet the same qualifications as for a full CDL, and pass all knowledge tests required for the vehicle they intend to operate.

Learner permits are issued for 12 months from the date of issuance, and cost \$14 for a Class PA, or \$13 for a Class PB or PC-plus \$2.50 for each endorsement. The permit will be added to the license a driver already has, which will more than likely have a different expiration date.

For example, someone with a Class D license expiring in July 2007 adds a PA to the license in January 2006; this driver will then have a Class DPA. The expiration date for the license itself remains unchanged, but the permit will expire January 2007.

**Drivers with a learner permit may operate a commercial motor vehicle only when someone with a CDL valid for that class of vehicle is accompanying them in the front seat of the vehicle.**

## 1.7 Where to Apply

Applicants for a CDL may apply at any full-service Driver License Station for their knowledge test.

Skills Test, however, are administered at only the following eight locations, where you must call for an appointment:

You may either make an appointment online at <http://www.tennessee.gov/safety/driverlicense/dlmain.htm>

Or

Call our CDL Help Desk at 253-5221 (in the Nashville area) or 1-866-849-3548 (Statewide)

## CDL Skills Test Centers:

Chattanooga-Bonny Oaks (Hamilton County)  
Cookeville (Putnam County)  
Jackson (Madison County)  
Johnson City (Washington County)  
Knoxville-Strawberry Plains (Knox County)  
Memphis-Whitehaven (Shelby County)  
Nashville-Hart Lane (Davidson County)  
Columbia-(Maury County)

Remember, as a courtesy to other drivers, **Keep Your Appointment.** If you cannot make the appointment, call the station at least 24 hours in advance so another driver from the waiting list can be contacted.

Code	Description
L-Vehicle without Air Brakes	Driver not permitted to drive with Air Brakes because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Failed or did not attempt Air Brakes test, or</li> <li>Used vehicle without Air Brakes for skills test</li> </ul>
51-Intrastate Only	Used for all CDL's issued to a driver under age 21
52-Gov Vehicles Only	For drivers that drive government vehicles only (except School Bus Drivers)
53-Intracity Zone Only 54-Intrastate Only, Medical Limitation	For driver who do not meet DOT physical standards but are allowed by FHWA to driver their CMV in a very limited area.  For drivers who are required to meet DOT physical standards, but fail them for vision or insulin controlled diabetes.  Can driver only within state of TN and only in intrastate commerce. P&S&H endorsements not allowed.
55-Except Class A bus	Issued to drivers with a Class A who also have a P endorsement for Class B or C vehicle
56-Except Class A and	Similar to above: issued to drivers with a Class A or B when P

B bus	endorsement applies to Class C vehicle
57-Except Tractor-Trailer	Added to the Class A only, for drivers who operate a vehicle meeting Class A weight definitions, but vehicle is not a "combination vehicle". Examples: tow trucks pulling vehicle > 10,000 lbs; utility trucks, goosenecks

## For All Commercial Drivers, Before you apply for your CDL...

### 1. Prepare for your test

- Knowledge test can be taken at any full-service Driver License Station.
- You will not have to study this entire manual-see figure 1.2 on page 1.2.
- Allow yourself plenty of time for your tests: at least one hour for the General Knowledge test, and an additional 20-30 minutes for each other test. Try to arrive as early in the day as possible.
- Stations have different operating schedules, so check ahead of time to see when they close.
- If you need an oral test, please call first for an appointment.

### 2. Obtain Your D.O.T. Medical Card

- All drivers applying for a CDL license must have a current, valid medical card before they are allowed to renew, get a duplicate, take a test or in any way proceed with the CDL process.
- The only exceptions are drivers who are employed by government entities and not needing the school bus endorsement. These drivers will have a restriction code added o their CDL, restricting them to government vehicles.

**Call the CDL Help Desk at 253-5221 (Nashville area only) or 866-849-3548 (Statewide) to make an appointment for a CDL Skills Test. Also you can make an appointment online at**

**<http://www.tennessee.gov/safety/driverlicense/dlmain.htm>**

- As a courtesy to other drivers-keep your appointment! Or call to cancel at least 24 hours in advance, if you must.
- You must provide your own vehicle
- Vehicle must be of same class as the license you need, and must be empty.
- Allow 1 to 2 hours for your skills test.
- If you cancel your appointment less than 24 hours in advance, you will be placed at the end of the waiting list for future appointments.

### 5. Be sure to Bring with you:

- Any and all driver licenses and state-issued ID's.
- Validation of your social security number (ideally, the social security card itself; or any of the following which shows both the name and SSN: W-2 forms, a computer-generated pay stub or bank statement, or health insurance card.
- Your current valid medical card (see above).
- Bring proof of citizenship or lawful permanent residence.
- If you need the School Bus endorsement, your "2-C" form (or, if you will be working for a private school, you'll need to have a letter on school letterhead which contains the "2-C" information).

### Fees for Common, Basic CDL's) Issued for 5 years):

Note: The length of your license is determined by the "Drive For Five" law-it may actually be from 4 to 7 years, depending upon when your next birthday evenly by 5 is.

- Class A: \$46 (\$6 non-refundable application fee plus \$40 license fee).
- Class B or C: \$41 (\$6 non-refundable application fee plus \$35 license fee).
- Add \$2.50 for each endorsement you require, plus \$18.50 for motorcycle class.